

# A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



With great pleasure and considerable pride, we present the fifth issue of *Portal*, the first that reports on activities carried out under the directorship of myself and Associate Director Juliet Hooker. It has been a packed-full and exciting year, with a combination of activities conceived by our predecessors, Bryan Roberts and Jonathan Brown, and others that emerged in the course of the year. We are very grateful to Bryan

and Jonathan for their efforts to turn over an organization in such fine condition and for their help in easing the transition. We also are deeply indebted to the multitalented and exceptionally committed staff, who guarantee the continuity of LLILAS's programs, and whose hard work is absolutely crucial to the smooth execution of such transitions. The rich and varied contents of this *Portal* are a testimony to the institute's strength and vibrancy.

Each academic year, LLILAS has the privilege of hosting three visiting professors from Latin America, who teach seminars that enrich our curriculum and who add immensely to the intellectual community that the institute seeks to build. This year we benefited from a surfeit of these riches, with two more visiting professors than usual. The political scientist Rafael Hernández provided a Cuban insider's view on the Cold War and on Cuba's difficult adaptation to the post-Cold War world. Two Mexican scholars, historian Roberto Breña and sociologist Francisco Alba, both from El Colegio de México, were especially welcome participants in our intellectual community, as we prepared for an intense year of activities in commemoration of 2010, Mexico's bicentennial/centennial year. Colombian economist Francisco Thoumi also joined us for the fall semester, sharing his expertise on the illegal drug trade and its political-economic effects in the region (see article p. 38). During the spring semester, we hosted, together with the Butler School of Music, Prof. Beatriz Ilari, who channeled her expertise in music and childhood education in Brazil into a graduate seminar and a lecture series on Brazilian ethnomusicology.

Our Mexican Center, in coordination with Prof. Susan Deans-Smith of the History Department, organized an impressive array of activities for the Mexico 2010 celebration that will continue through the fall semester. The events kicked off with a roundtable in January on the economic consequences of Mexican independence and the revolution, with an international roster of participants. In April, noted historians of Mexico Alan Knight from Oxford, Eric Van Young from UC San Diego, and Erika Pani from El Colegio de México participated in a *Many Mexicos* panel on nation-state formation. For a full discussion of the events and issues surrounding this milestone in Mexican history, see our lead story on p. 4.

Through our Brazil Center, we also sponsored a large and diverse series of activities on Brazil. With the School of Architecture, we cosponsored a lecture series commemorating the founding of Brasília. Brazilian native Fernando Lara, who recently joined our faculty in Architecture and is profiled on p. 50, conceived this series, and reflects on its importance in this issue (p. 12). We also were pleased to sponsor, together with the Warfield Center for African and African American Studies, a study abroad program in Rio de Janeiro on Theories of the African Diaspora. *Portal* readers can expect to learn more about this program, and many other Brazil-oriented LLILAS activities, in future issues.

Each year LLILAS sponsors a major conference, fully supported by the Lozano Long endowment. These interdisciplinary affairs, always with ample participation of colleagues from the region, tackle a major Latin American intellectual problem. This year's Lozano Long conference topic could not have been more timely: endemic violence. Prof. Héctor Domínguez of the Spanish and Portuguese Department, one of the key organizers of this highly successful event, offers an overview of its contributions on p. 34. Among other results, this conference helped us to conceive an initiative to which LLILAS will be committed over the next few years, focused on gender violence in Mexico and Central America.

LLILAS initiates a wide array of activities of its own, with public programming that often reaches beyond the campus to include the community in the discussion of pressing policy issues. An example is the *Foro Urgente* on Honduras we held in fall 2009 to provide a venue for members of the Honduran and UT communities to debate the implications of the June coup in that country (see article p. 25). LLILAS also facilitates communication and coordination of LAS-related work across the campus. Much of UT's Latin America related teaching, intellectual program, and outreach takes place in the context of these cross-campus partnerships, which are well represented in the articles here. We also would like to acknowledge the students who wrote articles for this issue, and more broadly, all our MA and BA students, whose education is the fundamental purpose of the institute.

Finally, our sincere thanks to the multifaceted supporters of LLILAS, from the university itself, to the U.S. government (both Title VI and an additional grant, LAEDA, described on p. 48), and to the remarkably generous host of private donors, including many UT alumni, headed by the Lozano Long family. We are honored by the confidence this generosity entails, and deeply energized by the opportunities that it makes possible. We are sure that as you read this *Portal*, you also will feel that energy, and share in our excitement for the upcoming year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Charles R. Hale". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Charles R. Hale, Director

Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies